

## CDSW Core Competency Standards

*Certification of the competency of workers is a standard role of professional associations, such as ADWA. What follows is intended to be the basis for ADWA's evaluation of worker skills for its certification process at the CDSW level. It is organized so that each core competency (bolded) with a basic definition is labeled with a single number (e.g., 1.). It is followed by one or more subheadings (bolded) representing some aspect of that core competency, labeled with two numbers (e.g., 1.1.). The core competency standards (unbolded) to be met by workers are labeled with three numbers (e.g., 1.1.1.). It is important that the standards statements be easy to understand and demonstrable/measurable by some means (e.g., assessed coursework, work sample, essay test, testament). Feedback at this point should focus on whether the identified standards are clear and the right things to measure.*

- 1. Focus on Individuals** - Identifying and acting to address current and upcoming needs of individual(s); providing effective service to internal (individuals, families, guardians/trustees, coworkers) and external contacts (suppliers, government, community).

### **1.1. Identifies and responds effectively to individuals' requests.**

- 1.1.1. Seeks input and feedback from individuals to develop a clear understanding of their needs and outcomes.
- 1.1.2. Responds to requests efficiently and effectively within the limits of the rules.
- 1.1.3. Meets individuals' needs in a respectful, helpful and responsive manner.
- 1.1.4. Takes action beyond explicit request within established service standards.
- 1.1.5. Refers complex questions to the supervisor.
- 1.1.6. Uses appropriate methods to determine whether the individual is satisfied with the type and level of support the worker provides.
- 1.1.7. Adjusts service based on feedback from the individual within the limits of the rules.

- 2. Building Relationships** – Supporting the development and maintenance of meaningful relationships between the individual and others in the community.

### **2.1. Supports active participation in the community.**

- 2.1.1. Identifies groups and/or social, volunteer or work activities in the community that match the individual's interests and schedule.
- 2.1.2. Talks to people in the community to find people and settings that are welcoming and a good fit for the individual.
- 2.1.3. Advocates with community members for inclusion of individuals with disabilities, citizenship rights and opportunities that other citizens have.

2.1.4. Supports the individual's contribution to activities and engagement with others in the community setting.

## **2.2. Supports meaningful personal relationships with others in the community.**

2.2.1. Identifies the individual's strengths and needs (e.g., communication, social skills) related to development and maintenance of social relationships.

2.2.2. Identifies practical barriers (e.g., transportation, resources) that may make building or maintaining relationships challenging for the individual.

2.2.3. Works with the individual and others in the planning team or support network to identify and implement strategies to overcome personal or practical barriers to development and maintenance of social relationships.

## **3. Fostering Independence in Others - Nurturing self-sufficiency and self-determination, and sharing responsibility with individuals and families to promote a deep sense of commitment and ownership over decisions affecting them.**

### **3.1. Encourages self-confidence and belief in people's abilities.**

3.1.1. Describes individuals' human and service rights and responsibilities in ways the individual understands and provides support as needed for the individual to access rights and fulfill responsibilities.

3.1.2. Provides instruction, guidance and support in a helpful and supportive manner.

3.1.3. Expresses positive expectations that individuals will take an active role in achieving their goals.

3.1.4. Shows belief in and respect for others' (e.g., individuals, families) capabilities by speaking of them in positive terms.

3.1.5. Openly credits individuals who have performed well, making them feel stronger, more capable, and able to function to the best of their abilities.

### **3.2. Provides guidance to increase personal control in decision-making (i.e., self-determination).**

3.2.1. Works with the individual and support team to reach agreement and a shared understanding of who will take what role in making decisions and completing tasks.

3.2.2. Provides individuals with information, tools and resources appropriate to their level of understanding and capability so that they have what they need to make good decisions for themselves.

3.2.3. Considers health and safety issues in decision-making.

3.2.4. Recognizes and supports the choices of individuals within the limitations of the rules.

**3.3. Provides guidance to increase independence.**

3.3.1. Assesses what an individual can already do before attempting to provide training or support on a task.

3.3.2. Can describe the way the individual prefers to learn and the evidence on which that judgement is based.

3.3.3. Demonstrates how to complete tasks to acceptable levels of success.

3.3.4. Provides individuals with information, tools and resources appropriate to their level of understanding and capability to complete tasks.

**4. Creative Problem Solving and Decision Making** - Identifying and solving problems by seeking complete information to understand the situation from the viewpoint of all who are affected, identifying and weighing the pros and cons of alternatives, and where appropriate involves the individual(s) in choosing the most appropriate course of action given the circumstances.

**4.1. Uses a practical approach to solve problems.**

4.1.1. Uses one's knowledge, common sense and/or past experience to recognize, understand and solve problems/issues.

4.1.2. Breaks down a complex problem/issue into its parts.

4.1.3. Identifies multi-dimensional factors influencing a problem situation.

4.1.4. Identifies discrepancies, trends and interrelationships in the information used to make decisions.

4.1.5. Goes beyond the obvious implications of a set of facts to consider deeper or long-range implications.

4.1.6. Recognizes cause and effect relationships in a situation that are likely to affect the outcome.

4.1.7. Considers the pros and cons of possible solutions for each of those affected by the situation.

**4.2. Is open to new ideas or creative solutions.**

4.2.1. Is willing to consider a new perspective.

4.2.2. Applies new information to work out problems and situations.

4.2.3. Changes approaches when a situation calls for a different means from the usual.

4.2.4. Works with others to find solutions that meet each involved person's most important needs as defined by them in order to maximize buy-in from all parties affected and achieve the goal or decision.

**5. Flexibility** - Understanding and appreciating different and opposing perspectives on an issue or situation, and adapting one's approach as the requirements of a situation change (including changes in job requirements).

**5.1. Accepts need for flexibility.**

5.1.1. Acknowledges that other people's differing points of view can be as valuable and as reasonable as one's own.

5.1.2. Demonstrates willingness to change ideas or perceptions based on new information or contrary evidence by encouraging others to share their reasoning or what they know.

**5.2. Applies rules flexibly.**

5.2.1. Maintains the intent of policies, and exercises good judgement when deciding that circumstances require flexibility in applying a practice or procedure to fit a specific situation, to get a task done and/or meet goals.

**5.3. Adapts tactics.**

5.3.1. Sets and adjusts priorities among multiple tasks (e.g., putting important tasks on hold to handle an urgent need, and then returning to important tasks that have a significant impact on individuals' lives).

5.3.2. Evaluates the situation and decides what actions or approach to take in achieving the person's goal based on the demands of the situation or the needs/wishes of the person.

5.3.3. Tailors own approach to an issue/situation based on the differences in culture, working or learning style and priorities of others in the team (including the individual).

5.3.4. Notices the results of actions and adapts if they are not working based on previously discussed alternative plans.

**6. Interpersonal Relations and Respect** - Building positive, committed working relationships with others (including individuals receiving services as well as family members, co-workers, other staff, other professionals, etc.) based on sensitive consideration of others' needs, feelings, perspectives and motivations.

**6.1. Interacts respectfully with others.**

6.1.1. Treats people with respect, dignity and courtesy in all situations by paying attention to the volume and tone of one's own voice, and interacting with them directly rather than through others.

6.1.2. Uses person-first language when communicating about individuals with disabilities.

## **6.2. Actively seeks to understand others and build relationships.**

6.2.1. Takes the time to get to know and understand the interests, concerns and objectives of others.

6.2.2. Reviews documentation and relevant information gathered by others to seek a better understanding of the individual.

6.2.3. Attempts to identify others' interests (e.g., fears, hopes, beliefs, expectations, goals, priorities) in preparing to discuss emotion-laden issues that could result in conflict.

6.2.4. Pays close attention and accurately interprets others' behaviours (e.g., body language, tone of voice, facial expressions, nuances, questions) to determine their feelings and intent.

6.2.5. Gains the confidence of others and establishes good working rapport with people regardless of any differences in backgrounds or cultures.

## **6.3. Uses empathy effectively.**

6.3.1. Can describe how another person views a situation and how it is different from their own viewpoint.

6.3.2. Demonstrates sincere caring for what people are experiencing with words, tone of voice, facial expressions and body language.

6.3.3. Carefully observes others to accurately anticipate how individuals and groups will react, and tailors approach accordingly.

6.3.4. Consistently and effortlessly adjusts behaviours to reflect current, unexpressed or poorly expressed thoughts, concerns or feelings.

6.3.5. Produces good results by displaying tact, cooperation, sensitivity and respect for the opinions and situations of others and their culture or background.

**7. Communication** – Respectful interaction that builds understanding, encourages open sharing of information and feelings, and supports working together. Communication includes listening, writing, speaking, sign language, gestures, facial expressions and body language.

### **7.1. Listens to gain a better understanding.**

7.1.1. Puts aside distractions and focuses full attention on those trying to communicate with you to encourage them to communicate.

7.1.2. Listens quietly and patiently to others' words and their emotional tone, and watches facial expressions and body language in order to communicate interest and build a better understanding of the other person.

7.1.3. Checks own understanding of others' communication by rewording, asking follow-up questions, etc., without interrupting what they are saying.

7.1.4. Recognizes that challenging behaviour can be a form of communication and seeks to understand the circumstances leading to it and its value to the individual in terms of consequences.

## **7.2. Speaks to share information and ideas clearly.**

7.2.1. Shares information in a timely fashion, so that others who need to know have enough time to make informed decisions or prepare for change.

7.2.2. Adapts content, style, tone and method of communication to suit the other person's history, language, cultural background and level of understanding.

7.2.3. Checks to see that others understand by asking them to put what was said in other words, give examples, demonstrate it, answer open-ended questions or add their own ideas.

7.2.4. Addresses misunderstandings with examples that are relevant to the person's specific situation or life experience.

## **7.3. Writes to document events and guide action.**

7.3.1. Following employer timelines and policies, documents what readers need to know in order to understand and take action in a timely way.

7.3.2. Uses respectful and easy-to-understand language to present facts and examples, and does not include personal judgments.

7.3.3. Writes in grammatically-accurate language with correct spelling, punctuation and word choices in order to reduce misinterpretations.

## **8. Self-Control - Keeping one's emotions under control and restraining negative responses when under stress, provoked or when faced with opposition or hostility from others.**

### **8.1. Restrains own emotional impulses.**

8.1.1. Pays attention, recognizes and takes steps to control own negative emotional responses to situations and others (e.g., suggesting a short break to analyze or get a handle on own emotions, when appropriate).

8.1.2. Maintains composed body language in situations when one's opinions, recommendations or ideas are being challenged.

8.1.3. Pauses to reflect before acting so that own emotional impulses do not stop others from communicating honestly and fully.

## **8.2. Behaves calmly in emotionally-charged situations.**

8.2.1. Acknowledges the concerns of others respectfully and presents benefits from all perspectives.

8.2.2. Expresses differing opinions and disagreements with tact and sensitivity to others' positions and interests.

8.2.3. Presents evidence/observations or explains reasons behind own opinions calmly and reasonably to encourage their consideration.

8.2.4. Avoids actions known from documentation or commonly expected to escalate emotional responses in a situation.

8.2.5. Determines and uses the best response to calm irate, upset or agitated individuals who find themselves in stressful or crisis situations (e.g., humour, empathic listening, explanations, etc. as found in behaviour support plans, if applicable).

## **9. Teamwork - Working collaboratively with others (e.g., supervisor, co-workers, other professionals, guardians/family, individuals) to achieve common goals and positive results.**

### **9.1. Participates as a team member.**

9.1.1. Understands the team's goals, each team member's role and how they interconnect.

9.1.2. Shares relevant experiences, knowledge, ideas and best practices with team members.

9.1.3. Deals honestly and fairly with others, showing consideration and respect for their needs.

9.1.4. Manages workplace conflicts and differences in beliefs and values.

9.1.5. Offers support to co-workers and works collaboratively rather than competitively to achieve team goals.

9.1.6. Meets commitments made to others.

## **10. Values and Ethics - Conduct, attitudes and viewpoints that demonstrate personal integrity and a commitment to the principles that guide the decisions and actions of the profession and the agency/organization/sector.**

### **10.1. Demonstrates overall personal integrity and practises the fundamental values of the workplace.**

10.1.1. Demonstrates good work ethic by being on time, being prepared and informing those affected in a timely fashion if unable to meet commitments.

10.1.2. Follows instructions, guidelines, procedures, policy, laws and regulations, asking questions if unsure of how to interpret and apply them.

10.1.3. Takes responsibility for own actions, openly acknowledging their own errors of judgment without being prompted by others.

10.1.4. Contributes to an open and safe workplace atmosphere in which individuals and co-workers feel they may safely raise, discuss and address ethical issues.

10.1.5. Demonstrates awareness of personal/professional boundaries and acts in accordance with workplace values and policies.

10.1.6. Demonstrates an understanding of the principles and limits of confidentiality in situations where personal information about others is involved.

## **10.2. Acts consistently with professional values and ethics.**

10.2.1. Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the relevance of fundamental values and ethics of the profession to everyday work, and consistently attempts to apply them.

10.2.2. Identifies instances where professional values and ethics suggest different solutions to ethical dilemmas.

10.2.3. Seeks full understanding of facts and interests of all concerned when confronting ethical issues and dilemmas, and reflects upon all options in search of a best solution.

10.2.4. Seeks guidance on details and norms of the profession when in doubt, and then demonstrates an understanding of the rationales behind them.

10.2.5. Shows an equal concern for means and ends.

**11. Professional Excellence** – Striving to reach a higher standard of performance through continuous learning and improvement. The higher standard may be in relation to one's own past performance, an objective measure, the performance of others, a reachable goal one has set or a "benchmark" that may have been set by others.

### **11.1. Desires to do job well.**

11.1.1. Makes an effort to do the job well or right, following employer policies and government regulations.

11.1.2. Expresses a desire to improve and may express frustration with waste or inefficiency.

### **11.2. Creates own measures of excellence.**

11.2.1. When creating professional goals for oneself, understands the needs of others involved and gets buy-in from those affected for key elements (e.g., supervisor, co-workers).

11.2.2. Identifies new or more precise ways of meeting organizational goals.

11.2.3. Keeps track of and measures outcomes against a standard of excellence.

### **11.3. Takes steps to improve performance.**

11.3.1. Knows job requirements and actively works to maintain and upgrade relevant skills.

11.3.2. Follows through from program or individual planning information to achieve desired outcomes.

11.3.3. Actively suggests ideas for improving processes in the system or in own work methods.

11.3.4. Works to achieve consistency in service development and delivery.

11.3.5. Enthusiastically volunteers to take on additional tasks.

11.3.6. Contributes recommendations and anticipates barriers to implementing these recommendations.

11.3.7. Is persistent in finding better ways to do things, such as making suggestions that will improve a number of services or doing something better, faster, at lower cost, more efficiently.

11.3.8. Attends, actively participates in and successfully completes required training and professional development aimed at improving knowledge or skills.

11.3.9. Asks mentors and supervisors to share best practices to help improve outcomes.

**12. Maintaining a Safe and Healthy Workplace** – Ensuring that risks to the health, safety and well-being of oneself, the individuals one supports and others in the work environment are recognized and appropriately managed.

### **12.1. Practises health and safety skills on the job.**

12.1.1. Follows safety procedures and protocols set out in policy.

12.1.2. Practises universal precautions consistently.

12.1.3. Recognizes risks in the work environment and takes actions to manage risks.

12.1.4. Recognizes signs of stress or health issues in oneself and takes actions to maintain health and effectiveness.

## **12.2. Promotes health, safety and well-being of others.**

12.2.1. Recognizes signs of illness, health issues, abuse or stress in the individuals one supports and follows up effectively.

12.2.2. Supports individuals to learn about safe and healthy lifestyles and pursue goals the individual may have related to wellness. (This may be in conjunction with other professionals.)

12.2.3. Supports co-workers to recognize signs of stress or illness and take care of their own physical and mental health.

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